MATWATCH

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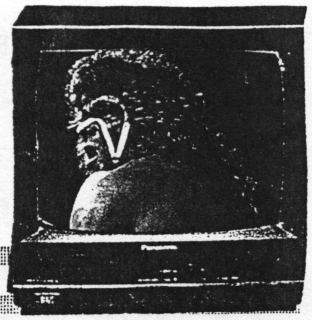

JULY 30-AUGUST 5 VOL. 3, NO. 5

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

FLAIR BACK IN NWA ACTION AFTER STAPH

ATLANTA----Ric Flair was expected back in action on the NWA tour over the weekend after a layoff from a staph infection.

Harley Race subbed for Flair on most of the Florida swing and the early part of last week after Flair contracted the ailment.

In Florida, he accompanied Race and Barry Windham to the ring. NWA executive Jim Herd told MATWATCH: "You know Flair. He won't stay out any longer than he has to."

SCOTT'S NAWA APPEARS TO BITE DUST

CHARLOTTE---George Scott's North American Wrestling Association is apparently dead, though promotion officials have told wrestlers otherwise.

NAWA wrestlers were told last Monday Scott's group was "taking a three-week hiatus." But a source close to the group told MATWATCH: "It's over."

Former NWA world champion Ricky Steamboat was the NAWA's top name. The promotion lost an estimated $250,000 in its short history.

STEAMBOAT WINS ICW TITLE FROM ATLAS

NEW JERSEY---Vic Steamboat, brother of former NWA world champion Ricky Steamboat, has won the ICW heavyweight championship from Tony Atlas, who's leaving for the WWF.

Atlas is expected to start this Friday for Titan Sports after an extended stay with Mario Savoldi's promotion.

Steamboat's former tag partner, Eric Sapracea, is expected to be his top foe.

IWA LOSES SLOT ON SPORTSCHANNEL

NEW YORK----Rob Russen's International Wrestling Association has been canceled from Sportschannel America.

The IWA, which opened with a 13-week deal, will be dropped from SCA in early August.

More Indies Fall

IT'S STILL A MATTER OF TV

The system seems to change but never really does; there are only modifications and changes in style. But the public is not lashed to it. The freedom of the public, in fact, is the time bomb in television.

---Les Brown
TELEVISION: The Business Behind the Box

If you read an item in THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES, you were likely not surprised. The death of George Scott's North Carolina-based wrestling promotion was a casualty predicted virtually from birth. In the last week, Ivan Putski's Dallas-based group has had its obituary. And Rob Russen's IWA, which featured Larry Cameron and Kerry Von Erich, is quickly being bumped from a disastrous run on Sportschannel America.

In every instance, in addition to lacking deep-pocket financing required in today's pro wrestling market, these independent promotions have perished because of a key word: television.

In the competitive world of television news, a profession I wallow in every day, a key catchphrase is: "You can't simply attract people to a good newscast but you can surely pull them away from a bad newscast, if you're better." One can draw some parallels to pro wrestling.

Ever since Vince McMahon's 1984 metamorphosis of production values and national syndication, long-suffering traditional fans have pined for the return of the classic, local television wrestling show which can set in for a multiyear run. Folks, it's simply not going to happen.

All of these independents have leaped forward with high hopes and optimism they would carve a share of the marketplace to keep them on sound financial footing. Yet, none of these groups have been able to get solid time periods on any top-ranked stations within their markets but that is only one part of the problem. Scott's NAWA struggled on a number of early-morning time slots on weaker UHF stations. All the excellent Ricky Steamboat matches can't overcome TV delinquency. Putski was caught in a gridlock of fighting indies in the Dallas area. And Russen's IWA was probably only seen by tape traders and wrestling junkies in its late-night time period on a cable network which only penetrates 20 per cent of U.S. cable homes.

The other side of the question was production values and that takes money. Other than the NWA and the fledgling LPWA, no TV show in America can even come close to rivaling McMahon's $125,000-a-week production budget. It is a fact of life the clock cannot change that once new and younger viewers are exposed to the expectation level of a McMahon show and pizazz of most NWA pay-per-view offerings, the small indie is like a dachshund in a world of pit bulldogs. Only the junkies will watch. And local television executives, facing enormous financial pressures today in every half-hour on the schedule, will yank a bad wrestling program in a New York second if they can make more money selling a paid commercial, such as AMAZING DISCOVERIES or NEW GENERATION HAIR CARE.

The truth is: the freedom of the public Les Brown wrote about 20 years ago is the fatal enemy of the small indie in wrestling. TV can make it but, more often, cheap and uncreative use of television suffocates it. But some never learn. Word has it Billy Jack Haynes wants to make another try at an outlaw promotion in Portland. If his money and TV are no better than last time....

Pinfall Profile
LIVE WITH
CHRIS & TERRY

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Chris Cruise and Terry Funk, since their departure from NWA WORLD WIDE WRESTLING in early spring, have made the rounds of the wrestle/talk radio circuit. The following is excerpted from their recent guest shot on John Arezzi's PRO WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT in New York)

FUNK: Do you realize that WORLD WIDE WRESTLING: the Funk and Cruise show was doing double the ratings they are now? And can you imagine what the show would have done if it would have just been THE TERRY FUNK HOUR? Why, we might have even quadrupled what we had normally done with Mr. Cruise there.

AREZZI: There's been a change in direction in the NWA and it's sorely lacking the presence of Chris Cruise and Terry Funk.

FUNK: They should miss us. We're very talented individuals.

AREZZI: What are you doing now?

FUNK: I'm going around the country doing special guest appearances. Can you imagine what could be better than that? Do you think that I would like to be running around the NWA now with Oily Anderson?

AREZZI: You both had rather sudden departures from the NWA. Any bitterness there now?

FUNK: None at all. CRUISE: Not for me.

AREZZI: Any chance of you resurfacing there?

FUNK: No. CRUISE: Yes. For both of us. FUNK: Did you say yes? CRUISE: I said yes, for both of us.

CALLER: Any chance of either of you coming to the WWF?

FUNK: I don't think so. But look out, you might see another organization beginning to emerge.

CALLER: What do you think of the current direction of the NWA? Do you think it's better to bring back guys based on their reputation, rather than current ability?

FUNK: Well, I think current ability always has to be number one. That should be the most prominent thing you have to look at. But as far as older guys with names that are recognizable, that's wonderful. But if they can't cut the mustard, forget about 'em. Go on down the road. It's supposed to be a profession of the best. Let's make it that. Some of them are tough but some of them aren't but you better weed 'em out in a hurry or they'll wash out quickly.

CRUISE: What Terry won't tell you is this is a man of great pride who came back in his 40s a year ago and he had "abs." He'd been working out and his abdominal muscles were showing. He knew he had a name but he backed it up in the ring. FUNK: Yeah, but you can't win a match with abs.

AREZZI: It was a disappointment to see you actively leave the ring but on the announcing side of it, it was entertaining, to say the least, and then to just have you disappear from the airwaves was disappointing.

FUNK: Well, I'd like to say our disappearance was of no fault of mine or Chris Cruise's and I don't want to really expand on that.

AREZZI: Chris, will you be resurfacing in any other organization.

CRUISE: I start July 20 (postponed) with Ladies Professional Wrestling. I've been talking with two other organizations but I my heart is with the NWA and they know I'd like to return and I'd like to work with Terry again.

AREZZI: Any comment on the creative direction of the NWA?

CRUISE: I'm a fan. I'll never be a wrestling expert. I don't ever want to book. I wouldn't want to own a promotion. I know enough that I don't know anything about wrestling. I do know what I like and I have certain comments and opinions but unlike so many others, I don't feel mine are important enough. Do I like seeing the Junkyard Dog in a main event match against Ric Flair? I guess the answer's no. But there's so many ways for it to go.

CALLER: Terry, what do you see for yourself in the future? Just hearing that you're gonna bounce around Texas...

FUNK: I don't know if I want to do that. I say that kind of tongue-in-cheek that being down here would be better than the NWA. Right now, at this particular time, I'll be very honest with you. I don't approve of the management of the NWA. I'll differ with Crispy about that. I'm not trying to muzzle him. I'm just telling you with the structure that is right now, I have no desire to be in the same room, to be in the same city or to be in the same state with those people.

CALLER: What do you think about the NWA making this racial issue a thing? Is it because of the South? People here up North could care less if the JYD is a black man.

CRUISE: I think one word might be appropriate: desperation. I'm very uncomfortable with the racism issue...frankly, I don't understand why Ted Turner's allowing it. Maybe he just doesn't watch the wrestling. It just doesn't seem the type of thing to do in the '90s, the '80s, the '70s or even the '60s, for that matter. But I don't think we should be criticizing just the NWA at this point. Racism, stereotyping tends to work in wrestling. Now if the fans don't respond to it, they're sending a clear signal.

FUNK: It's UNINTERESTING! If it would put a butt every 18 inches, that would be one thing but it's such an absurd thing, it's uninteresting.

(Next week: a Page 6 followup on Chris & Terry.)

TV TEMPO

July 23-29

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Curt Hennig d. Brooklyn Brawler; Jimmy Snuka d. Tony Burton; Dino Bravo d. Sheldon; VIDEO: Sapphire w. more gifts; Tugboat d. Black Bart; VIDEO: Sgt. Slaughter; Jake Roberts d. Gary Richardson; Demolition d. W.T. Jones/Tom Stone. RESTHOLD.
[SUPERSTARS]: Bossman d. Brawler; (UPDATE) Slick takes over Power & Glory (Hercules/Roma); Boris Zhukov d. Scott Colton; Dusty Rhodes d. Paul Diamond; Bad News Brown d. Troy Williams; BRO. LUV: Legion of Doom; Earthquake d. Alan Reynolds; Jim Duggan d. Buddy Rose; VIDEO: Sgt. Slaughter. RESTHOLD.

(PRO WRESTLING '90) - [REPLAY]: (LOSER LEAVE GA.) Nick Busich d. Shotgun Tony Gage; (From LPWA) Bambi d. Jan Flame; (CLASSIC) Tom Zenk/Dan Kroffat/Armand Rougeau win 6-man; Chris Walker d. The Sheik by DQ when Abdullah the Butcher interferes; (INTL.) Owen Hart/Johnny Smith d. Kerry Brown/Duke Myers; (REPLAY) Death Row attacks Hillbillies & "injures" Grizzly Boone; Dino Minelli/Mike Winner vs. Steve Lawler/Billy Black ends in brawl. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: Brian Pillman d. Zan Panzer; Stan Hansen d. Robbie Idol; Paul Orndorff d. John Douglas; Big Van Vader d. Jason Knight; Tommy Rich d. Bill Ford; Southern Boys d. Mark Kyle/Fred Avery; Arn Anderson/Barry Windham d. Dave Diamond/Dave Johnson. BOMB-PLUS.
[NWA PRO]: Doug Furnas/Rich d. Barry Horowitz/Krusher Knopf; Mark Callous d. Tim Hughes; Steiners d. Ford/Joe Cezana; DANGER ZONE: Paul E. w. Freebirds; Buddy Landell d. Mark White; Rock & Roll Express d. SST by DQ when DOOM attacks R&R but Steiners make save. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: John Tatum d. Bill Dundee & kicks Tessa in head after; Kerry Von Erich d. Matt Borne by default when Matt doesn't show; Chris Adams vs. Steve Austin double DQ & Chris & Toni are left laying. RESTHOLD.
[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: (REPLAY) Jeff Jarrett-Iceman Parsons brawl; VIDEO: Kowabunga; Jerry Lawler d. Deuce Mason; Wild Things d. Ben Jordan/Tim Hall; (REPLAYS) Dundee-Tony Anthony saga; Dundee d. Ken Wayne by DQ when Dirty White Boys run in & Eddie Gilbert drags Tessa by hair & Lawler saves; Dirty White Boys d. Rex King/Joey Maggs for over top. DRAW.

(LPWA) - [Synd.]: Shelley Francis d. Brenda Brown; Glamour Girls d. Bambi/Magnificent Mimi; Linda Street d. The Goddess when Jonathan Blue hits Goddess by accident. DRAW.
[Cable]: The Beast d. Big Mo; Bad, Black & Beautiful d. Sindee Paradise/Linda Street; (LPWA TAG TITLE) Misty Blue Simmes/Heidi Lee Morgan d. Nasty Girls. DRAW-PLUS.

(CNWA) - Steve Gillespie d. Brad Young; Akam Singh d. Ben Jodoin; Shane Croft d. Masked Eagle; CNWA TOURNEY: Biff Wellington d. Johnny Smith by DQ; Jerry Morrow d. Ron Ritchie w. trunks. RESTHOLD.

(ICW) - Rochester Roadblock d. Southern Jet; Ray Oddyssey d. Psycho; Cowboy Hoss d. Kingpin; Hawaiian Hurricane d. Mike Fortune; Chief Thundermountain d. Tony Atlas. BOMB-PLUS.

(WINDY CITY) - Col. DeBeers d. Rambo Robinson; Frank (The Tank) Nelson d. The Thrasher; The Turbo d. Captain Fantastic. BOMB.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Bossman d. Brawler; Zhukov d. Colton; Jimmy Snuka d. Tony Burton; Barbarian d. Troy Williams; Rhodes d. Diamond; Rhythm & Blues d. Ronnie Garvin/George Anderson; 'Quake d. Reynolds; Roma d. Rose; Roberts d. Richardson; SEGMENT: Sgt. Slaughter; (WWF TAG TITLE) Demolition d. Santana/Jim Brunzell. RESTHOLD.

(IWA) - Sunny Beach d. Montana Mauler; Terminator d. Thunderfoot II & after, Diamond Dallas Page offers to manage T'foot; Cousin Luke d. Jim Folger; Ivan Koloff d. David Sammartino w. feet on ropes; HANDICAP: Samoan Afa d. Ray Apollo/Larry Cameron but after, Chief Jules Strongbow turns on Afa when Afa hits Jules by mistake. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(SOUTHEASTERN) - Jim Boss d. Larry Santana by DQ when Luke Graham Jr. runs in; (From Vonore TN 1987) Su- perstar vs. Tommy Rich ends in bloodbath; Graham d. Chaz Lane; Assassin/Killer Kyle d. Damage Patrol; Moondog Max d. Jeff Bowman; Richie Dye d. Texas Outlaw; Super- star d. Chief Little Lynn; END OF SHOW: Fan (no plant) takes over mike from J.C. Carson. RESTHOLD.

(ALL-JAPAN) - [7/9]: Danny Spivey d. Akira Taue; TRIPLE CROWN: Stan Hansen d. Kenta Kobashi to keep title; Jumbo Tsuruta/Yoshiaki Yatsu d. Toshiaki Kawada/Mitsuhara Misawa (Tiger Mask II). DRAW-PLUS.
[7/16]: (REPLAYS) Bruiser Brody highlights, including win over Tsuruta (3/27/88); SEGMENT: Hansen remembers Gordy; PWF JR. HWT TITLE: Masanobu Fuchi d. Tsuyoshi Kikuchi; Steve Williams/Terry Gordy/Johnny Ace d. Hansen/Spivey/Joel Deaton; Tsuruta/Mighty Inoue/Great Kabuki d. Misawa/Kogashi/Toshiaki Kawada. POWERSLAM.

(USWA/WMC) - Brian Lee/Don Harris d. Tim Dixon/Brian Starr and after, Lee gets into shoving match w. Snowman; Snowman d. Don Garza; (MID-SOUTH) Snowman d. Lee by DQ when Harris runs in before Jeff Jarrett saves; (MID-SOUTH) TEXAS DEATH: Jerry Lawler/Bill Dundee d. Eddie Gilbert/Tony Anthony but after, as Tessa is about to gain revenge on Dirty White Girl, Tom Burton escapes handcuffs & Lawler/Dundee tripleteamed until Jarrett saves; ANGLE: Eddie steals PWI photog Sam Lowe's camera & Anthony throws coffee in Lowe's face; Mr. Devastation d. Keith Goldsby; Kowabunga d. Ken Wayne; KARATE DEMO/ANGLE: As Kowa begins to break boards, Wild Things jump him & Jeff Gaylord smashes board over Kowa's head until Wayne saves; Wild Things d. Rex King/Joey Maggs by DQ when Kowa/Wayne run in & brawl erupts, Bruno decked. DRAW-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [WCW]: Pillman/Zenk d. Mike Thor/Ford; Landell d. Lee Scott; (From WWW): Hansen wins squash; WRAPUP: Jim Ross w. Tommy Rich; S. Boys d. State Patrol & after, S. Boys & Freebirds get into 4-way brawl; Sid Vicious d. Jamie McKinnon; Scott Steiner d. Samoan Fatu when Samu attacks Scott w. shovel & hangs him before Rick Steiner saves; Sting d. Scotty Williams; Freebirds d. Tim Parker/Joe Defuria; Trucker Norm d. Barry Horowitz; Brad Armstrong/Tim Horner d. Arn Anderson/Barry Windham when Sid runs in & legdrops Tim...Sting, JYD & Orndorff save; ANGLE: Rich tells Ross the Horsemen "got Luger," who dashes into ring w. torn clothes. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[POWER HOUR 7/22]: Pillman/Zenk d. Knopf/Wolf; SST d. Vince

Van Dooley/Johnson; WNN: Gordon Solie on Hansen/Rich feud; Arn/Windham d. Hughes/Burton; Orndorff d. Panzer; LOUISVILLE SLUGGER: Cornette w. JYD; M Ex d. Rich/Horner. RESTHOLD. [MAIN EVENT 7/22]: Freebirds d. Art Mesa/Johnson; S. Boys d. Koala Kahn/Avery; Landell d. McKinnon; Midnight Express d. Burton/Padiera; DANGER ZONE: Paul E. w. Sting; Luger d. Lt. James Earl Wright; Ricky Morton d. Ron Simmons by DQ when Butch Reed runs in before Robert Gibson saves. RESTHOLD.

(PORTLAND) - Scotty the Body draw vs. Grappler; Beetlejuice/Steve Doll d. Ricky Santana/Al Madril 2-3 falls & BJ sprays sillystring all over Al; Scott Norton d. Moondog Moretti; Equalizer vs. Larry Oliver in progress as show ends; INTERVIEW SEG: Tailor-Made Medina/Ginger brawl to a pullapart; FIESTA GARDEN: Madril has sack on his head & Doll pulls it off. DRAW-PLUS.

(WWF/NBC) - [SNME]: (I-C TITLE) Curt Hennig d. Tito Santana in PILEDRIVER-PLUS match; VIDEO: HULK RULES tribute; ANGLE: Hulk Hogan tells fans why he's back when Earthquake, Bravo & Jimmy Hart enter ring but Tugboat comes out to help Hogan; WWF TITLE: Ultimate Warrior d. Rick Rude by countout & Ult bashes Bobby Heenan after; Bad News Brown d. Jim Powers; WWF TAG TITLE: Demolition d. Rockers when Demo does switch & Hart Foundation & L.O.D. come to ring after; Kerry Von Erich d. Buddy Rose. POWERSLAM-PLUS....a fine effort.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Stan Hansen, ALL-JAPAN: "I will never forget (Bruiser) Brody's voice. Brody was a teacher. I know he taught me. I know he taught Terry Gordy. Especially, he taught the promoters. He taught me to stand up for myself." 2. Eddie Gilbert, WMC: "A lot's been written about Eddie Gilbert lately. Some good. Some bad. All interesting." 3. Joe Pedicino, PW '90, on Toni/Jeannie Adams angle: "It's like seeing your mother-in-law going over the cliff in your brand new Cadillac." 4. Jesse Ventura, WWF, on Sapphire's necklace: "With the size of her neck, there's no way you could buy that off the shelf." 5. Jerry Lawler, WMC, to Dave Brown: "A lot of people have probably never seen a wrestling match live, like you, Dave, too cheap to buy a ticket." 6. Gilbert, PW'90: "Nick Busich looks like he came from a barber shop quartet in downtown Atlanta." 7. Dutch Mantel, WWW: "Stan Hansen doesn't just spit tobacco. He swallows it." 8. Pedicino, WVEU, on Boni Blackstone: "She's dangerous when she's around handcuffs." 9. Bob Caudle/Jimmy Garvin, WCW: (BC) "I've never seen you talk to the Southern Boys." (JG) "Bob, there's some question whether you've ever seen anything." 10. Hawk, WWF: "We snack on danger and dine on Demolition."

11. Ventura, WWF: "The only problem with looking at (Sapphire's) necklace is you have to look at what's wearing it." 12. Jim Ross, WCW, on Trucker Norm: "He'd make C.W. McCall proud." 13. Snowman, WMC, on Brian Lee: "You've got a headful of boiler grease." 14. Bobby Heenan, PTW, on being at a live arena: "It's like being at your honeymoon. You didn't want to hear about it. You wanted to be there." 15. Ron Simmons, NME: "My mama took a switch to me and told me to bring home the biggest one I could find." 16. Jim Cornette, NME: "Junkyard Dog, you like to chew on bones while they're still on people's legs." 17. Junkyard Dog, PH, to Cornette: "When you talk to me, talk with your mouth down, 'cause you're raining all over my shoulder." 18. Gene Okerlund/Alfred Hayes, SNME: (GO) "Are we going up the river?" (AH) "Why?" (GO) "'Cause I've always wanted to meet Pete Rose." 19. Steve Doll, PORTLAND, to Al Madril (with sack on head): "Who are you? The Unknown Wrestler?" 20. Alfred Hayes, SNME, on Okerlund's chimp: "He (Gene) has found a friend. Perhaps a descendant of his own family."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Gilbert, WMC: "Lawler, it's time for you to pass the torch to me. Just like Jackie Fargo passed it to you."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Gilbert, WMC, to Sam Lowe: "Are you on Lawler's ballteam?" 2. Tony Rumble, ICW, on Bob Dow: "Can you believe how bald he is?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. SAM LOSS (Gilbert on Sam Lowe). 2. THE GREATEST FATHER IN THE WORLD, SUPPOSEDLY (Michael Hayes on Tommy Rich). 3. BROTHER IMPOSTERS (BRO. LUV on Legion of Doom). 4. THE JOE ISUZU TEAM OF WRESTLING (Ross on Freebirds).

BEST PICTURES - 1. WMC, closeups of Gilbert/Anthony peering from behind curtain during Lawler interview. 2. WCW, Sid Vicious clothesline. 3. WWF, Elderly woman dancing to "American Dream." 4. WCW, Sting rubbing baby's head. 5. WCW, Brad Armstrong's "Candyman" trunks. 6. WCW, Barry Windham popping Armstrong on ear. 7. SNME, Al Hayes as Marlin Perkins. 8. SNME, Nogginknocker on Rude/Heenan.

ENGLISH LESSONS - 1. Sheik, PW'90, on Festus: "I don't think he HAVE never changed those funny-looking clothes." 2. Samuel F. Kent, WVEU, on Bushwackers bars: "Have you ever ATE any of their ice cream?"

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. WMC, board breaking before Kowabunga's karate demo. 2. Biff Wellington, CNWA, for calling CNWA belt "the former North American title," a belt which belonged to the old Stampede group.

DREADED GLITCH AWARDS - 1. WMC, One studio camera out of registration. 2. WMC, shot goes out of focus during Gilbert/DWBs/Lawler angle.

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Tommy Rich, "...birds of a feather flock together."

BOO AWARD - SNME, for Okerlund/Hayes skits. The jungle theme was okay but Gene & Alfred should have left the acting at home.

TUBE TALK

Thunderbolt Patterson and Jim Wilson have gained commitments from Georgia gubernatorial candidates for a state wrestling commission, which Turner officials oppose....Hennig vs. Santana was one of the three best TV bouts of the year....Scotty vs. Grappler was to be for one hour Saturday night in PORTLAND....Kimberly Anthony missed WMC-TV Sat. after having wisdom teeth pulled Friday....Expect Sam Lowe to have an even bigger role in Eddie Gilbert's Memphis angles... Dick Woerhle was guest on THE LARRY KATZ SHOW Saturday night. ...As of Friday, only 56 supertickets were left for John Arezzi's FANS FANTASY WEEKEND Aug. 24-27 in NY and Philly. Call 516-226-3366 for details. It includes the NWA Meadowlands show & SUMMER SLAM....David Woods talking of restarting a territory next January. NOT a good idea. FSB.

COULD IT BE?: Lots of speculation going on that Jesse Ventura will not return to the WWF this fall. Some of that is being doubly fueled by shooting for the new TAG TEAM series and the rest because Quantum Media is dickering heavily to get Jesse for the LPWA color role. If Jesse does not sign, Diamond Dallas Page will get the slot.

STILL LOOKING: The WWF has still been running major ads in national trade magazines seeking a new announcer. The L.A. weatherman thought to be the pick for CHALLENGE failed his final test, so Vince is still looking.

SNME SIDELIGHTS: We'll review more closely next week but the Curt Hennig-Tito Santana match for the I-C belt on SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT was a well-created match and Curt is my vote for the top performer this year. And, for what it was, the Warrior-Rude match was well-handled, though the finish was inevitably predictable for an NBC show.

IRONIC NOTE: THE GOODWILL GAMES on TBS are averaging a 2.5 rating, which is less than the nine-week average for Ole Anderson's WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING editions.

A BIG LOSS: Jim Claussen, the man who has produced so many of those classic NWA promos, including SEASON'S BEATINGS and TEXAS SHOOTOUT, will do them no more. He's being promoted to a bigger role with Turner's new regional network, SportSouth.

CLASH CAPPER: Ric Flair will challenge for Lex Luger's U.S. title in the topliner of CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS XII in Asheville, N.C., Sept. 12. on TBS. Plans for a Luger-Stan Hansen match have been scuttled.

BILLY JACK'S BAIT: As followup to our column, Roddy Piper, apparently back behind the scenes to assist Don Owen in Portland, is bouncing Billy Jack Haynes, so B.J. wants to again start up his own group in Portland. He's discussed it with Rich Mancuso of WFAN and the LIVE WRESTLING TALK hotline but Haynes' PCWA failed miserably in 1988.

FLORIDA TREATS: We're told Bobby Eaton and Buddy Landell made a phenomenal tag team on a couple of dates on the NWA Florida swing. The group drew approximately 6,000 at the Bayfront Center in St. Petersburg.

SATURDAY SURPRISES: This coming Saturday on the USWA Memphis show, expect a few surprises surrounding Eddie Gilbert and Gumby the gorilla, who serves as the show mascot.

MUTA MOCKING: At the WCW tapings July 23, Joe Cezana took on a wrestler who came out with a black hood, did handspring elbows, a snap elbow drop and closed with a moonsault. Is Muta back? Try Ranger Ross under the hood.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS: Not an overwhelming number of competitive matches at the tapings. But there was a good Freebirds-Southern Boys match for Saturday's WORLD WIDE. In a recurring angle, Luger stands in the aisle six different times during Horsemen matches.

OMNI OMENS: WWF at the Omni Aug. 5. Boni Blackstone and Samuel F. Kent will be local hosts with Sammy & Boni overseeing a kids' "paint-your-face" contest.

MATWATCHING

GEORGIA GROANINGS: Mike Golden and Big Daddy have been bumped from PRO WRESTLING '90's Georgia All-Star group after working for rival Ted Allen's north Georgia group on the same date as a TV taping.

TITLISTS: Steve Lawler captured the Georgia TV title and the team of Billy Black and Mr. Wrestling (a certain promoter could not even remember Mr. W's real name) earned the Georgia tag team belts in a tourney.

TIM'S TROUBLES: A funny moment came when Tim Dix claimed he was the reason Black and Mr. W had won the belts and they beat the stew out of him. Dix sat and cried like a baby.

FOR THE RECORD: ESPN bumped AWA last Monday for a delayed final round of an LPGA tourney.

WESTERN SWING: Jim Herd is back from a week-long swing to negotiate with TV stations on the West Coast for NWA coverage but Herd can't talk specifics on his talks, other than to say "we had good conversations."

OWEN GOINGS: WCW office talked with Stu Hart last Wednesday. Owen Hart is scheduled home from West Germany Sunday and Herd says WCW is still targeting Sept. 1 for Owen's debut with the NWA. But some other writers are being told Owen may wait until January.

NEW USWA HOTLINE: The USWA WRESTLING FANS HOTLINE will launch Aug. 10 with the 900 number likely to have this lineup: (MON) Joe Pedicino's Newswire, (TUE) Percy Pringle, (WED) Boni Blackstone's Locker Room Confidential, (THU) Jeff Jarrett, (FRI) Skandor Akbar, (SAT) Bill Apter, (SUN) Billy Joe Travis.

NEXT WEEK: We'll have more letters and I'll have a column on my first visit to the live WMC-TV matches this past Saturday.

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YOU SAID IT!!!

Knowing ahead of time that Vince was going to voiceover and acknowledge Ed Leslie's accident, I was hopeful for some grown-up dignity. Instead, the dignity came from Gordon Solie's WNN on 7/13/90 with the NWA's acknowledgement and well wishes. What we got from Vince reminded me of perhaps the verbiage Eddie Gilbert got in terms of management minimizing the seriousness of his injury.

Vince's sarcastic tone for a worker most don't care about anyway was abominal. I may not like the Brutus character or workrate. But he is a human being deserving of our sympathy for an accident that could happen to any of us. "Some kind of parasailing---whatever that is" and "this may put Brutus' quest for the Intercontinental title on hold for awhile" were ridiculous statements. Vince knows full well BB may never work again and the severe head injury, 10 plates, stitches, etc., necessitate a minimum 12-16 months recoup. It insulted me enough to suggest this and not the Hogan "retirement' as the most disgusting promotional tactic of 1990.

DR. MIKE LANO
SAN FRANCISCO CA

I thought you had flipped giving Vince a "class act" award for his comments on Beefcake's injury until I saw the BOO AWARD immediately after. I nominate McMahon for the CALLOUS AWARD of the year.

RICK CHRISTIAN
EASTON PA

I must express my outrage over Jesse Ventura's comments about the American flag on the 7/21 edition of WWF SUPERSTARS. When Vince remarked about Jim Duggan befriending Nikoli Volkoff, Jesse shot back it's a good thing the U.S. Supreme Court still allows flagburning. This remark was tasteless and disgusting. Vince is just as much to blame for this remark as Ventura since Vince can veto any of Jesse's remarks. If Vince cannot or will not control what is said on the weekly WWF shows, I believe the FOX network should. Vince should remember he is just a player in television and should be taught discipline when the situation warrants it. This was one of those situations.

VINCE DiPALMA
COPIAGUE NY

(FSB: Vince, one clarification: the FOX network does not carry the WWF, only your local FOX affiliate.)

I'll say it even plainer: Vince should suspend himself for his reprehensible, nonchalant comments on Brutus Beefcake's injury.

ROSS McTAGUE
GAINESVILLE FL

First off, like you, I really enjoyed Eddie Gilbert in the UWF. He had a lot of charisma. He made it interesting. The NWA used him as a fan favorite and it went over well with Missy (Hyatt) as his valet. But Eddie's heart is in being a villain. Between injuries and his character being misused, Eddie was phased out in the NWA.

On the LARRY KATZ SHOW, Eddie strongly criticized the NWA (more than you did, believe it or not) on the direction it was taking. He felt the show should be centered around guys like him 30 and under. He felt Ole left him out and I agree. Though I like Ole's method, I would prefer a Gilbert/Hyatt angle over T'bolt Patterson, though Patterson is not being built up. How about a Gilbert vs. Landell for Missy angle?

JEFF SUREFF
PIKESVILLE MD

(FSB: Jeff, I guess it's a little late for that.)

RATINGS RAP

PRIME TIME NUDGES WIN IN CLOSELY BUNCHED PACK

By a margin of 35,000 homes, PRIME TIME WRESTLING on the USA network nudged two NWA Sunday night offerings and USA's own ALL-AMERICAN WRESTLING to lead the cable ratings for the week ending July 23.

PRIME TIME's 3.0 rating drew 1.584 million homes, compared to NWA MAIN EVENT and NWA POWER HOUR with 1.5805 million homes each. The two TBS shows scored 2.9 ratings. The 2.9 was the highest ever for POWER HOUR in its special Sunday at 7:05 p.m. time period.

The 2.7/6.9 for WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING puts Ole Anderson's nine-week average at 2.6/6.8. Subtracting the one 4:05 p.m. airing, Ole factors to a strong 2.7/7.2.

CABLE

Week Ending July 23	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 7/23)	3.0	5.0	1.584 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 7/22)	2.9	6.9	1.58 million
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 7/22)*	2.9	6.3	1.58 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 7/22)	2.9	8.1	1.53 million
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 7/21)	2.7	6.9	1.47 million
NWA MAIN EVENT (R) (TBS 7/21)	0.6	7.1	327,000

* - Special Sunday 7:05 p.m. airing

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